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THE GREAT WEST: IN FACT AND FICTION

By

EMILY BRIDGERS



CHAPEL HILL

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THE GREAT WEST: IN FACT AND FICTION

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CHAPTER I

O STRANGE NEW WORLD

"A man walked, as it were, casting a shadow, and yet one could never say which was man and which was shadow, or how many the shadows that he cast."—Yeats.

"We are great, and rapidly - I was about to say fearfully - growing!" John C. Calhoun exclaimed in 1817. And in 1833 the French traveler, De Tocqueville, wrote, "This gradual and continuous progress of the European race toward the Rocky Mountains has the solemnity of a providential event. It is like a deluge of men, rising unabatedly, and driven daily onward by the hand of God."

This growth and this deluge, its character and its influence on America, the historian, Frederick Jackson Turner, discussed brilliantly and incisively in a series of papers in the latter part of the last century and the early years of this. Collected into a volume in 1920, the essays afford a most satisfactory introduction to the character and ideals of the men and women who settled and developed the West, and whose early fierce democracy did indeed, but a few years after Calhoun spoke, strike fear to the heart of the conservative East.

Ahead of the daring settlers went the even more daring explorers, hunters and traders. It is the story of the most famous of the explorers that John Bakeless tells in *Lewis and Clark: Partners in Discovery*, the story of the two who set out into country most of which no white man had ever seen, country which in its most western reaches crossed the forbidding Rockies to the Pacific coast.

Bakeless, a teacher of journalism, writes entertainingly and with due respect for fact, making copious use of the Lewis and Clark journals and of other early sources. His very interesting material on the Indians, gains added authority from his own rearing among the Indians of the Carlisle Indian School, with which his father was connected.

Born in Portage, Wisconsin, and educated at the University of Wisconsin and at Johns Hopkins University, Turner (1861-1932) taught American history at the University of Wisconsin until 1910, when he accepted an offer from Harvard University.

A thoughtful scholar, he aroused through his lectures and published work both interest in an examination of the character and importance of the settlement of the West and healthy controversy among those who disagreed with some of his conclusions.

1. YOUR FACE TO THE GREAT WEST

"By the scale of a hemisphere shape your designs."—Lowell.

The Frontier in American History, by Frederick Jackson Turner

As Turner suggests, station yourself at Cumberland Gap, and again a century later at South Pass in the Rockies and, watching, describe the procession advancing westward. Comment on the role of the trader and the hunter, the means of transportation (noting the initial importance of buffalo and Indian trails), the advancing centers of frontier attraction and settlement, the later influx of foreign born, and the ultimate strong mixture of races and tongues.

Rather poetically, Turner expresses the opinion that the forest clearings of pioneer days have been the seed plots of American character. Discuss his conception of the Western pioneers' characteristics and ideals, noting his belief in the dominant role played by free land in the development of character, and with particular attention to his discussion of the "new democracy that . . . came, stark and strong and full of life, from the American forest."

Nowhere more than in the West, Turner believes, and particularly in the Mississippi Valley, did the fundamental pioneer ideals of individualism and of a democracy grow through the years into sharper opposition. Discuss, noting especially the vast opportunities in a land of stupendous natural resources offered by the squatter ideal to the strong, and the later expression of each of the two ideals: the one, in the rise of captains of industry and of powerful combinations; the other, in what Turner refers to as successive and related tidal waves of popular demand for legislative safeguards to rights and social ideals.

Would you agree that Turner offers an interesting, even an exciting, approach to the West of fact and fiction, to the West of yesterday and today, but particularly to that golden West of adventure and opportunity which, like the South of moonlight and roses, long ago captured the imagination of Americans? Comment.

Additional Reading:

The American: The Making of a New Man, by James Truslow Adams. Scribner.

The Yankee Exodus: An Account of Migration from New England, by Stewart H. Holbrook. Macmillan.

The Life of Andrew Jackson, by John Spenser Bassett. o.p.

Andrew Jackson: The Border Captain and *Andrew Jackson: Portrait of a President*, by Marquis James. Bobbs.

Main Currents in American Thought, by Vernon Louis Parrington. 3 vols. in one. Harcourt.

The Winning of the West, by Theodore Roosevelt. 6 vols. in three. Putnam.

Life of Henry Clay, by Carl Schurz. 2 vols. o.p.

The Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth, by Henry Nash Smith. Harvard University Press.

2. IN THE PATH OF EMPIRE

"We ever held it certain that going toward the sunset we would find what we desired."—Cabeza de Vaca (1535)

Lewis and Clark: Partners in Discovery, by John Bakeless

Explain the circumstances surrounding the Louisiana Purchase and tell of Jefferson's long-time plans for a "literary" exploration of the Missouri-Columbia route across the wide unknown West.

Through background, training, experience and temperament, Lewis and Clark were the two young men Jefferson's heart could most desire for his expedition into the mysterious western lands. Give pertinent facts of the early life, and discuss the befitting qualities of mind and heart, of each young man. Note, in passing, Lucy Marks and the characteristics of this "exquisite mistress" of Locust Hill which made of her the sturdy mother of a frontier adventurer.

In undertaking the expedition, Lewis and Clark set out literally into a strange new world. Noting the nature of sources of information on the Missouri country and commenting on how much—and how little—real knowledge was available to Lewis and Clark (and to Jefferson and the Congress!) on the character of the new territory (by definition, those lands drained by the Mississippi and its tributaries), discuss the all but inspired organization and outfitting of the Corps of Discovery, notably the kind and collection of supplies and equipment, and the procurement and training of "robust helthy hardy young men."

This "peaceful scientific promenade" set out on Sunday, May 13, 1804, and returned on September 23, 1806. Trace carefully on a good map, giving necessary dates and drawing attention to points important then and now, the course the promenade took to the Pacific and back. Tell something of the beauty, terror and hazard of the country through which it passed, particularly of the ferocity of the rivers and the splendor and uncomfortableness of the coast country, and of the wildlife, notably the magnificent grizzlies and the majestic buffalo.

The courage and resourcefulness of Lewis and Clark, their common sense and wisdom, their self-control and evenness of temper, go far to explain the success of their venture. Give examples, especially in the determination of the route, the procurement of food, the use of their small store of medical supplies and knowledge, their dealings with their men and their relations with the Indians.

Ingenuity in dealing with the Indians probably saved scalps for a safe return. Discuss aspects which interest you most of Indian life as the

expedition saw it and tell something of the nature of the rich, powerful tribes of the buffalo plains, as compared to the poverty-stricken tribes, the Shoshones of the Rockies, for instance.

In some ways, more interesting than their actual adventures, were the men themselves. Tell of some of them: of Cruzat and his violin, of York with his black skin, of Pryor, of Sacagawea and her "indestructible baby." Mention the amusements of these undeterred men—their love of dancing, their "attentions" to Indian women, their relish of music and the "Sounden horn," and, through all, their respect for the discipline which made the adventure possible. Who do you suppose were the more surprised at their safe return, the people of the United States or they themselves? Comment.

Sum up the glory and value, as you see it, of this expedition, remarking on the wide and entertaining variety of curios, specimens, small animals, etc., which Lewis and Clark sent to Mr. Jefferson, and on their extraordinarily exhaustive record of the region traversed.

Hiram Martin Chittenden says, "This celebrated performance stands as incomparably the most perfect achievement of its kind in the history of the world." Do you agree?

Additional Reading:

The Eyes of Discovery: The Pageant of North America as Seen by the First Explorers, by John Bakeless. Lippincott.

The Course of Empire, by Bernard DeVoto. o.p.

The Westward Crossings, by Jeannette Mirsky. Knopf.

Two Captains West: An Historical Tour of the Lewis and Clark Trail, by Albert and Jane Salisbury. o.p.

CHAPTER II

PATHFINDERS

"His birthright was the sun and sky, the wind and stars, freedom and solitude, the mystery and hardship and danger and beauty of the West."—Cleland.

In September, 1806, Lewis and Clark, almost home, remarked going in the opposite direction to themselves numerous parties of traders bound for that great unknown western territory from which their expedition was but just returning. In 1843, on a tributary of the Green River, a water of the Pacific Ocean, Jim Bridger established the first trading post west of the Mississippi for the convenience of emigrants. In the short period between the Lewis and Clark encounter and the Jim Bridger venture, there rose, flourished and fell into decline a group of men remembered today as "mountaineers," whose era is considered by some the most romantic in the history of the West, and whose contribution to the opening of the West was out of all proportion to both their numbers and the length of their tenancy.

From the wealth of writing on the mountain men two books have been chosen: the first, *This Reckless Breed of Men*, by Robert Glass Cleland, a factual story of trappers and fur traders of the Southwest; the second, *The Big Sky*, by A. B. Guthrie, Jr., a fictional account of the life of trappers and traders in the Missouri country. An enthusiastic and intelligent book by Wendell and Lucie Chapman about the wild animals of the Rocky Mountains is recommended as a special reference as much for its very fine illustrations as for its text. The Chapmans write of animals which are today protected for the most part by the United States Government, but which in their natural state played so important a role in the life of the mountain men.

Cleland (1885-), historian and author, was formerly a member of the History Department at Occidental College, Los Angeles, and is now on the permanent research staff of the Huntington Library at San Marino. Born in Shelbyville, Kentucky, he was reared in California and has for most of his life been a student of the history of that state and of Mexico.

Guthrie (1901-) was born in Bedford, Indiana, and reared in Montana, where he majored in journalism at the State Univer-

sity. A Nieman fellow at Harvard during the term 1944-45, he retired several years ago from newspaper work in Kentucky to give his full time to writing. *The Big Sky*, published in 1947, established him as a writer of sound, evocative historical fiction. In this novel the authentic invention with which he fits his story into the actual pattern of the life and the movement of events in the period 1830-43 is noteworthy.

1. MARCH WITH THE SUN

"I of course expected to find Beaver, which with us hunters is a primary object, but I was also led on by the love of novelty common to all, which is much increased by the pursuit of its gratification."—Jedediah Smith.

This Reckless Breed of Men: The Trappers and Fur Traders of the Southwest, by Robert Glass Cleland

A good atlas

A good history of the United States

As late as 1848, the American in what is today the Great Southwest was on forbidden ground, while in the Pacific Northwest he was in open and fierce competition with the English. Trace on a good map the region covered by Cleland and point out the territory dominated by the Spaniard and the Mexican, the territory to which England laid claim and the territory which the United States considered its own under terms of the Louisiana Purchase. For clarity, mention the dates and terms of settlements under which New Mexico, California and Oregon became without question the territory of the United States.

For nearly half a century, the only known wealth in the West was furs and, of these, beaver was the objective of practically all white men who entered the unknown West. Tell of the original value and abundance of the beaver, describe his habits, noting his intelligence, and tell something of trapping and trading methods with particular interest in the cache, the fortified trading post and the yearly rendezvous of trapper, trader, Indian and mountaineer.

The mountaineer of the West, whether north or south, was of a piece. Describe him—dress, arms, mode of life, methods of transportation and of subsistence, habits, relations with the Indians, aims, distinctive characteristics. Distinguishing between the ordinary run of mountain men and the "dominant, stabilizing element" of "sober, literate, and often deeply religious" men in their ranks, consider briefly the character of such men as Fowler and Glenn, St. Vrain, Ewing Young, Wolfskill, Jedediah Smith, and, for pure interest, Old Bill Williams.

Tell something of the extent of the mountaineers' operations and of their achievements: Jedediah Smith's dogged completion, for instance, (part of the way over ancient Indian trails) of the American's long trek across the continent; Smith's intrepid crossing of the bitter cold Sierra Nevada mountains and the dry, desolate Nevada-Utah plains; Walker's

scaling of "the dark and deathlike wall" of the Sierra and his discovery of the Yosemite Valley; the opening of routes for the Santa Fe trade. In the last connection, tell something of the makeup and cargo of the caravans and of the dangers and rewards of the expeditions.

Discuss further the perilous nature of the mountaineer's life, the never-ceasing threat of thirst, cold, starvation, prairie fire, accident, illness, Indian treachery and massacre.

The Umpqua massacre, revolting as the deed itself was, had results at once dramatic and revelatory of character. Telling something of the competition between the Hudson's Bay men and the mountaineers, and of partisan expeditions and work, discuss Jedediah Smith's meeting after the massacre with John McLoughlin, the action taken by the latter, and the feeling of the two men toward each other. Would you agree that the attitude and action of each in the matter was typical of the best tradition of the West of that day? Comment.

Special Reference: Wilderness Wanderers, by Wendell and Lucie Chapman.

Additional Reading:

The Journey of the Flame, by Antonio de Frerro Blanco. (A novel about California in 1810.) o.p.

River of the Sun, by Ross Calvin, and *Lieutenant Emory Reports*, edited by Ross Calvin. University of New Mexico Press.

The American Fur Trade of the Far West, by Hiram Martin Chittenden. 2 vols. o.p.

Powell of the Colorado, by William Culp Darrah. Princeton University Press.

Across the Wide Missouri, by Bernard DeVoto. Houghton.

The Diary of Susan Shelby Magoffin, edited by Stella Drumm. o.p.

Commerce of the Prairies, by Josiah Gregg. o.p.

Ramona, by Helen Hunt Jackson. Little.

The Raven: A Biography of Sam Houston, by Marquis James. o.p.

Jessie Benton Fremont: A Woman Who Made History, by Catherine Coffin Phillips, o.p.

2. WILD MEN ON THE MISSOURI

"This was the way to live, free and easy, with time all a man's own and none to say no to him. A body got so's he felt everything was kin to him, the earth and sky and buffalo and beaver and the yellow moon at night. . . . Here a man lived natural."

The Big Sky, by A. B. Guthrie, Jr.

In 1843, on his way home after thirteen years in the beaver country across the Missouri, Boone Caudill, at the Independence, Missouri, landing saw for the first time movers bound for Oregon. "Crazy sons of bitches," he called them. Tell, in brief, his story, with particular note of the reasons for his anger and resentment toward the movers.

In the story of Boone's journey up the Missouri with Jourdonnais and the *Mandan*, Guthrie recreates with remarkable intensity life on and along the river, and peoples his canvas with an assortment of characters.

diverse, unpredictable and vivid. Paint, in general, the picture as he presents it and tell the story of the *Mandan*, her slow, painful tricky progress, her cargo, her purpose, her fate. Comment on Indian life along the river, particularly as it was affected by the invasion of the white man. In discussion of some of the white characters involved, note Guthrie's keen, quick drawing of the Scotsman, McKenzie, according to Hiram Martin Chittenden "the ablest trader that the American Fur Company ever possessed," and who, universally feared and respected, ruled over an extent of country greater than that of many a notable empire in history.

Rich and swift is the story of Boone's life with his friends beyond the Missouri. Describe it, giving especial attention to the self-sufficiency and other salient characteristics of Boone, Jim, and Summers, and to episodes such as the rendezvous of 1837 and the expedition over the Northern Pass.

Commenting in passing on the generally ruthless behavior of the white man in his relations with the Indians, read aloud selected passages descriptive of the land, the people, the animals—passages indicative of the fascination of such a country and such a life.

Has Guthrie, perhaps, vigorously and realistically, on a more inclusive canvas, with richer comprehension, done for the Missouri and the fur country what James Fenimore Cooper, writing for earlier generations, did for the frontiers of the East? Comment.

Additional Reading:

The American Rhythm, by Mary Austin. (Amerindian songs re-expressed from the originals and Indian songs in the American manner.) o.p.

The Leather-Stocking Tales, by James Fenimore Cooper. Putnam.

The Sky Clears: Poetry of the American Indians, by A. Grove Day. Macmillan.

Indian Boyhood and Old Indian Days, by Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa). o.p.

Wolf Song, by Harvey Fergusson. Bantam Books.

Cry of the Thunderbird: The American Indian's Own Story, edited by Charles Hamilton. Macmillan.

A Tour of the Prairies; Astoria; and The Adventures of Captain Bonneville, by Washington Irving. Putnam.

Portrait of the Old West, by Harold McCracken. (Biographical sketches of artists who painted the life of the Great Plains, with examples of their work.) McGraw.

Up the Missouri with Audubon: The Journal of Edward Harris, edited by John Francis McDermott. University of Oklahoma Press.

The West of Alfred Jacob Miller (1837), with an account of the artist by Marvin C. Ross. University of Oklahoma Press.

Life in the Far West, by George Frederick Ruxton. University of Oklahoma Press.

Early Western Travels, 1748-1846: A Series of Annotated Reprints, edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites. 9 vols. o.p.

Joe Meek: The Merry Mountain Man, by Stanley Vestal. Caxton Printers.

CHAPTER III

VISION OF THE SOUTHWEST

"But the moment I saw the brilliant, proud morning shine high up over the deserts of Santa Fe, something stood still in my soul, and I started to attend . . . In the magnificent fierce morning of New Mexico one sprang awake, a new part of the soul woke up suddenly, and the old world gave way to a new."—D. H. Lawrence

One could not leave the Southwest without reading D. H. Lawrence's exciting essay on New Mexico in which, summoning his genius, he invokes the mystery, the sense of age, the spiritual inheritance, the great beauty, which is even today the mark of that region. Though Lawrence wrote of New Mexico, in his words, in the splendor, in the almost unbearable greatness of beauty which he found, is embodied the "vast, far-and-wide magnificence" which to the mind's eye of most Americans is the whole Southwest.

Nor should one leave without Willa Cather's story of a priest missionary on that bright edge of the world. In *Death Comes for the Archbishop* Miss Cather, fascinated and challenged, captures both the electric beauty of the changeless, yet ever changing, landscape, and the fierce, subtle beauty of the ancient Indian civilization.

Born in Winchester, Virginia, Miss Cather (1876-1947) when she was eight years of age moved with her family to Nebraska, where she grew up and received her education. Though she later lived in New York City, her finest work concerned the pioneers, who had early captured her imagination, and the Southwest as she came to know it.

For a note on D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930), consult the anthology.

1. GOLDEN LEGEND

" . . so that for a moment our eyes can see and our ears can hear what is there about us always."—Jean Marie Latour
Death Comes for the Archbishop, by Willa Cather

In *The Song of the Lark*, Miss Cather wrote: "What was any art but an effort to make a sheath, a mold in which to imprison for a moment the shining, elusive element which is life itself—life hurrying past us and running away, too strong to stop, too sweet to lose?" In *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, did Miss Cather so imprison the lives of Jean Marie Latour

and his friend, Joseph Vaillant—lives hurrying past, too strong to stop, too sweet to lose—that, in this “wilderness at the end of the world, where the angels could scarcely find” him and Joseph, the Bishop could justifiably say, “I shall not die of a cold, my son. I shall die of having lived”? Tell of their lives, quoting generously from the beautiful prose and drawing the contrast between the persons and characters of the two priests.

In none of her writing is Miss Cather’s prose more vivid than in her descriptions of the magnificent countryside and the robust weather through which the two men made their way. Again with generous quotes, describe this all but indescribable land. Tell of its disparate cultures and of its inhabitants, particularly the Indians of whom Miss Cather gives such a wonderfully live and comprehending account, the superstitions, and the wealth of legend through the use of which the author achieves such a sense of life and time and history.

Miss Cather explained the writing of this book: “I had all my life wanted to do something in the style of legend, which is absolutely the reverse of dramatic treatment. Since I first saw the Puvis de Chavannes frescoes of the life of Sainte Genevieve in my student days, I have wished that I could try something a little like that in prose; something without accent, with none of the artificial elements of composition. In the golden legend the martyrdoms of the Saints are no more dwelt upon than are the trivial incidents of their lives; it is as though all human experience, measured against one supreme spiritual experience, were of about the same importance.” Did Miss Cather, in this book, attain her end? Did this shining land and its strange ancient civilization, remote from the centers of temporal power, afford Jean Marie Latour a supreme spiritual experience? Reading his story, do you share his love for this land of his exile where “Something soft and wild and free, something that whispered to the ear on the pillow, lightened the heart, softly, softly picked the lock, slid the bolts, and released the prisoned spirit of man into the wind, into the blue and gold, into the morning, into the morning!”?

2. A LIVING RELIGION

“New Mexico,” by D. H. Lawrence, in *Southwesterners Write*, selected and edited by T. M. Pearce and A. P. Thomason

Read aloud this rare essay. Does Lawrence make his point of time, of cumulative effort, of “the oldest religion,” of permanence? Comment.

Additional Reading:

The Land of Little Rain, by Mary Austin. Houghton.

New Mexico: A Pageant of Three Peoples, by Erna Fergusson. Knopf.

Navaho Means People. Photographs by Leonard McCombe, and text by Evon Z. Vogt and Clyde Kluckhohn. Harvard University Press.

Roundup Time: A Collection of Southwestern Writing, edited by George Sessions Perry. o. p.

Consult the anthologies for a full listing.

CHAPTER IV

CONQUERORS

"There is more of the material of poetry than we imagine, diffused through all the classes of the community. And upon this part of the character it is, that the disposition to emigration operates, and brings in aid the influence of its imperceptible but magic powers. Very few . . . emigrate simply to find better and cheaper lands. The notion of new and more beautiful woods and streams, of a milder climate, deer, fish, fowl, game, and all those delightful images of enjoyment, that so readily associate with the idea of the wild and boundless license of new regions; all that restless hope of finding in a new country, and in new views and combinations of things, something that we crave but have not,—I am ready to believe, from my own experience, and from what I have seen in the case of others, that this influence of imagination has no inconsiderable agency in producing emigration."—Timothy Flint

Turner says, if you recall, that "the West" as a self-conscious section began to evolve in that period when the frontier was moving across the Alleghanies into Kentucky and Tennessee, and over the Ohio into the Northwest Territory. This being true, the nature of the men and women who first dared settlement of the region takes on high importance. By 1825 opinion as to their motives and stability was already sharply at variance. In the East President Dwight of Yale College had made his now classic commitment. "The class of pioneers," he had written in a book of travel, "cannot live in regular society. They are too idle, too talkative, too passionate, too prodigal, and too shiftless to acquire either property or character. They are impatient of the restraints of law, religion, and morality, and grumble about the taxes by which the Rulers, Ministers, and Schoolmasters are supported." In this belief, Timothy Flint had not concurred. Eastern born and educated, Flint had lived and preached for almost ten years among the backwoodsmen of the Mississippi region. "It is true," he wrote in his recollections of the period, published in 1826, "there are gamblers, and gougers, and outlaws; but there are fewer of them, than from the nature of things, and the character of the age and the world, we ought to expect. . . . The backwoodsman of the west, as I have seen him, is generally an amiable and virtuous man. His general motive

for coming here is to be a freeholder, to have plenty of rich land, and to be able to settle his children about him. It is a most virtuous motive. And notwithstanding all that Dr. Dwight and Talleyrand have said to the contrary, I fully believe, that nine in ten of the emigrants have come here with no other motive."

To the controversy Conrad Richter, a careful student of the period, brings today interesting evidence. In *The Trees*, the first (and some think the finest) of his trilogy of the settlement of Ohio, he tells the story of the Lucketts who, among the earliest of the backwoodsmen, crossed the river from the familiar red and brown earth of Pennsylvania to the black earth and dark forests of Ohio. With poetic awareness of the basic strength of character demanded by the sunless brooding forests into which the Lucketts penetrated, he re-creates the lives of those earliest forest pioneers.

Equally important was the character of those emigrants who first dared to cross the continent to the Western coast. Brodie says the first big emigrant train broke a road to the Pacific as early as 1842. Two years later, a caravan said to have consisted of one thousand persons, with 1,967 oxen, horses, and cattle, followed the trail to Oregon. It is of a caravan such as these, though smaller, that Guthrie tells in *The Way West*. Though this novel is not nearly so rich in invention nor so colorful in expression as *The Big Sky*, it is interesting in its revelation of the varied types of men and women who took the risk of the trail, and in the vivid descriptions of the relentless country through which they passed.

Richter (1890-) was born and reared in Pennsylvania, a region he has continued to study and to love. Completing high school at fifteen years of age, he worked in various capacities in Pennsylvania and Ohio until he graduated from newspaper work to creative writing. He now divides his time for the most part between his native state and the West.

1. THE WOODSIES

Nothing appear'd, but Nature unsubdu'd,
One endless, noiseless, woodland solitude.

—James Kirke Paulding in "The Backwoodsman" (1818)

The Trees, by Conrad Richter

Tell the story of Sayward, herself as sound as the forest which she conquered. The characters, Woodsies that they are, think most effectively in terms of nature. Quote generously from the enchanting pioneer expression.

Discuss at some length the restricted life in the dark forest and the accustomed daily habits of Sayward and her family, commenting on the children's lack of awareness of anything wanting in their lives. In the absence of toys or other forms of entertainment, note the intense pleasure and excitement Nature herself afforded these people; and toward an increasing respect for their all but total self-sufficiency, keep a running record of the kind and source of building materials, furniture, clothes, food, tools, etc. Familiar as you may be with the conditions of pioneer life, when in the end Sayward began clearing for a corn patch, were you suddenly amazed to realize how literally life had depended upon game? Did you then more easily understand the ill and reluctant Jary's consent to cross the Ohio? Her later intense longing for "wheat" bread?

Describe the expansion of this world in which the Lucketts lived, and the society which was gradually taking shape, with particular attention to incidents indicative of the community's character, and to such folks as the Covenhovens, Jake Tench, the bound boy, Louie Scurrah, Granny McWhirter, Portius Wheeler. Don't fail to note in this rudely strong and boisterous society evidences of the independence, cruel humour and primitive habits which so offended a safer, better fed East. Note that this very early society had no access whatever to educational facilities or to established law or religion.

Because in this Northwest Territory the soldier had preceded the settler, the Indian was usually a friendly visitor, as Worth Luckett would attest, yet women still feared him. Discuss him as the different Lucketts saw him, particularly as he appeared to little Sulie. Does Sulie's doll house in the woods hold for you the poignancy of the life of every pioneer child, whose baby-bed, in Lowell's words, "Was prowled roun' by the Injun's cracklin' tread"? Do you find Sayward's stoic acceptance of Sulie's disappearance evidence of a self-discipline worthy of the best in pioneer tradition?

Was Sayward, in fact, in her self-reliance, her stern standards, her grim forbearance, her energy, her courage, her common sense, her capacity for judgment and action, her will to give purpose to life, a fit representative of those pioneer folk from whose loins, to quote Theodore Roosevelt, "sprang mighty Abraham Lincoln"? Parenthetically, is her character leavened, as was Lincoln's, by the humour and tolerance from a more Southern clime?

Additional Reading:

The Ohio, by R. E. Banta. Rinehart.

The Old Northwest: Pioneer Period, 1815-1840, by R. Carlyle Buley. 2 vols. Indiana University Press.

Recollections of the Last Ten Years, by Timothy Flint. o.p.

The Conquest of the Old Southwest, by Archibald Henderson. o.p.

The Gabriel Horn, by Felix Holt, o.p.

The Life of George Rogers Clark, by James A. James. University of Chicago Press.

The Fields and The Town, by Conrad Richter. Knopf.

The Great Meadow, by Elizabeth Madox Roberts. o.p.

Davy Crockett and Audubon, by Constance Rourke. Harcourt.

Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, edited by W. P. Strickland. o.p.

2. TO BE A WESTERN MAN

"Men and Women. Children. Sucking babies. Milk cows. Mules and horses. Oxen. Plows. Seeds to decorate a dooryard. Books for unbuilt schools. The little fixings for the home to be. Whose was Oregon? Here, England, came the answer!"—Lije Evans

The Way West, by A. B. Guthrie, Jr.

Trace the Oregon Trail from Independence to Fort Vancouver (a matter of approximately 2,020 miles), describe the country through which the trail passed, and tell of the experiences nature held in store for the traveler: wind, dust, sun, fever, rain, sand, flies, mosquitoes, buffalo, rattlesnakes, Indians, thirst and hunger of cattle, horses and teams, cold and blizzard.

Describe the variety of types that went into the making of the On-to-Oregon Outfit: who the people were, where they came from, what it was that sent them on such a dangerous journey (Do you find evidence of the "influence of imagination"?), what they proposed taking with them (including children, unborn infants, and dogs!). Tell of the train's organization and rules (more honored in the breach than in the observance), its order of daily travel, camping habits, leadership.

Note the factors favoring the train—the natural peaceableness of the Kaws, with "not too much grit in their gizzards," the passage of Kearney's dragoons, the lack of good firearms among the Sioux, the Indian love of presents, the earlier ravage of the Blackfeet by smallpox—and discuss Tadlock's approach to the problem of peace with the Indians compared to that of Summers and Evans.

Are you struck at the beginning with the truculently independent spirit of this train in contrast to the later collective effort and sense of humanity which sustained it day by day? Give examples of both, and describe some of the more heroic or frightening episodes—the descent to the Snake and the crossing, for example, the buffalo stampede, travel along the Brulé.

In the end, do you have a satisfying impression of this famous trail where "every day lived was a day won," of "silence that rang the head like quinine," of "distance singing with the wind," of lush and beautiful valleys, of sandy wastes, of that "river out of hell," the Snake, and of the men and women who with hard work and pure grit followed it to the end?

Additional Reading:

- The Year of Decision: 1846*, by Bernard DeVoto. Macmillan.
Narcissa Whitman, Pioneer of Oregon, by Jeannette Eaton. Harcourt.
Promised Land: A Collection of Northwest Writing, edited by Stewart H. Holbrook. McGraw. And *Far Corner: A Personal View of the Pacific Northwest*, by Stewart H. Holbrook. Macmillan.
The Covered Wagon, by Emerson Hough. Grosset.
The Oregon Trail, by Francis Parkman. Modern Library.
The Discovery of the Oregon Trail. Robert Stuart's Narratives of His Overland Trip Eastward From Astoria in 1812-13, edited by Philip Ashton Rollins. o.p.
Farthest Frontier: The Pacific Northwest, by Sidney Warren. o.p.
The Great Northwest, by Oscar Osburn Winther. Knopf.

CHAPTER V

THE VIOLENT MEN

No two books afford more vivid experience of the violence of the early Western scene than do Fawn M. Brodie's *No Man Knows My History*, an account of the amazing life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon founder, and Walter van Tilburg Clark's examination of a lynching in the cattle country, *The Ox-Bow Incident*. It is true the date of the Ox-Bow incident was 1885, somewhat late in frontier history, but the nature of the community and the outlook of its inhabitants give to the book a distinct frontier character.

Clark (1909-) was born in East Orland, Maine, educated at the Universities of Nevada and Vermont, and has devoted himself to teaching and writing. Mrs. Brodie (1915-) was born, reared and educated in Utah, and from her earliest childhood has been familiar with the story of Joseph Smith. Subsequent to taking an M.A. at the University of Chicago, she spent a number of years in research for the present volume. She is the wife of Bernard Brodie, writer and associate professor in the Institute of International Studies at Yale University.

1. I'VE A HOWL IN MY HEART

"I aim to have my rights as a free-born citizen, even if I have to fight for them. As for my religion, that's a matter between my God and me, and no man's business but my own."—John L. Butler, Mormon.

No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, The Mormon Prophet, by Fawn M. Brodie

Analyze the peculiar magnetism of Joseph Smith, noting his evidently attractive appearance (recall Mrs. Brodie's reference to "Joseph's blond and careless magnificence"), dynamic personality, vigorous temperament, remarkably intuitive apprehension of character, hypnotic imagination, and other astonishing endowments which made of this enigmatic and fallible man a leader. (Remark Mrs. Brodie's observations on pages 294-96, and Brigham Young's statement, page 145.)

Single out the mental and physical attributes which fitted Smith for possible survival in a frontier society such as Mrs. Brodie describes in its barbarity, prejudice, greed, ruthlessness, cynicism, disregard for life, bursts of religious frenzy, impassioned evangelism, credulousness. Draw attention to the effect of land, debt on land and greed for land on the evolution of frontier society.

Into this scene came Joseph Smith. Fill in the early years of his life and give the main facts of his incredible story as founder and leader of the Mormon faith. Comment on those of his followers whom you find most interesting, not omitting the women, notably that wonderful wife, Emma.

Describe the growth of the movement, including essential intelligence as to organization, beliefs and practices. Taking cognizance of very human weaknesses in matters of speculation, unlawful currency, inflation, etc., draw attention to the thrift, energy, efficiency and really remarkable achievements of the Mormons when left to themselves.

Unfortunately, unwelcome as they were wherever they went, they were not left to themselves. Describe their explosive relations with their neighbors, noting the deplorable effect on these relations of land speculation, the Indian question and the slavery issue, and the part played in the drama by unscrupulous men, rumour and politics, and by genuine fear of the ambitious fanaticism of the sect. Incidentally, in how far do you think that the sect's complacent self-esteem, its tendency toward a communistic society, its proclaimed desire for pleasure and wealth and power at all costs in this world, riled to sullen fury frontier hostility to all pretension?

Tell of the steps finally taken by the Mormons for self-protection, and describe several of the most dramatic episodes in the conflict, episodes for the most part purely bloodthirsty, but in one instance—General Doniphan's refusal to shoot his prisoners—a wonderful example of fair play.

This whole strange, muddled, unbelievable, yet true, story certainly shows the frontier in its very worst aspect. Do you feel that in the general poverty of the day the majority of the Mormons were not just saving their own necks in meeting force with force, but were honestly convinced of their God-given right to well-being and happiness in this world? On the other hand, do you think that even a less greedy, less prejudiced, more secure society, though truly democratic, might have been inevitably and wisely alarmed at the ultimate nature of those "rights" and at the increasingly assumptive character of the Mormon leadership?

Additional Reading:

Children of God, by Vardis Fisher. Vanguard.

Family Kingdom, by Samuel Woolley Taylor. McGraw.

2. JUDGE LYNCH

"The true law is . . . the spirit of the moral nature of man."
—Davies

"Most men are more afraid of being thought cowards than of anything else, and a lot more afraid of being thought physical cowards than moral ones. There are a lot of loud arguments to cover moral cowardice, but even an animal will know if you're scared."—Art Croft.

The Ox-Bow Incident, by Walter van Tilburg Clark

Describe the half-empty village of Bridger's Wells, telling something of its spiritual poverty and the monotony and boredom of life there, and mentioning the momentary growing tension over cattle rustling and the cynical distrust of law enforcement.

Build the lynching group, describing the main characters and the most interesting of the minor ones. Incidentally, do you find Art, Gil and Farnley a relief from the invariably sentimental cowboy native to our fiction?

Follow the ride to the Ox-Bow valley and the questioning of the three men.

Discuss the part taken in the action by each of the men who interest you most. Draw attention to the fact that in the case of many who favored trial by lynching, decision was based in individual character rather than in due consideration, or was determined by reactions to purely personal experiences or problems: Farnley's rage over his beating at Gil's hands, for instance, and his desperation at Kinkaid's death; Croft's fear that protest might turn suspicion on him and Gil, and his weakened physical condition; Gil's bitter disappointment over Rose Mapen; Smith's desire for attention; Mapes' natural brutality; Amigo's sense of importance; and, most interesting, Tetley's cold determination to torture his son. In contrast to these men, place those who favored trial by justice: the articulate Davies, the pitiful and pitying Sparks, the tormented Gerald. What do you make, by the way, of the sheriff's action?

Do you think that such divergent and unrelated influences may have accounted for many Western lynchings (may account for any lynching), no matter how imperative action seemed? Discuss. Do you find particularly interesting the revelation of the equally fatal outcome of the lack of moral courage as exemplified by the well-meaning, humane Croft, the lack of physical courage as portrayed in Davies and Gerald, and the fury of an obsession such as dominated Tetley?

Additional Reading:

"Charles Goodnight," Cowman and Plainsman, by J. Evetts Haley. University of Oklahoma Press.

Southern Plainsmen, by Carl Coke Rister. University of Oklahoma Press

The Bubbling Spring, by Ross Santee. Scribner.

CHAPTER VI

SON OF THE WEST

Old Abe Lincoln came out of the wilderness,
Out of the wilderness, out of the wilderness,
Old Abe Lincoln came out of the wilderness,
Down in Illinois.

"So tall, with so peculiar a slouch and so easy a saunter, so bony and sad, so quizzical and comic, sort of hiding a funny lantern that lighted and went out and that he lighted again—he was the Strange Friend and he was the Friendly Stranger . . . In his way he belonged to the west country as Robert Burns belonged to Scotland or Hans Christian Andersen to North Europe."—Sandburg

In phrases which smolder and glow with the vitality, the humours, the reticences, the generousities of Lincoln himself, Carl Sandburg in *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* gives to the people of America the man who of all Americans best symbolizes the perfect democrat and who of all the thousands whose forebears made the great trek westward best exemplifies the sanity and depth of western democracy.

Sandburg's sense of history, his feeling for the passage of time, his knowledge of constantly changing frontier conditions, his communicated awareness of life as Abraham Lincoln experienced it in the West, of themselves would give to this account of the prairie years of Lincoln's life an excellence unusual in American biography. But even more exciting than these qualities is the poet's re-creation of the man: in his youth and young manhood growing in silence "as inevitably as summer corn in Illinois loam, when its stalks thicken as it lifts ears heavier with juices and longer with its dripping tassels of brown silk"; in his maturity "beginning to see what a little and willing piece of sacrifice a man must be for the sake of a dark fame."

It is Lincoln the western man who became Lincoln the great American that this outline would develop. Because Sandburg has so closely woven through the two volumes the pattern of Lincoln's personality and character, it might well prove both destructive and repetitious to limit topics to a volume. For that reason, this chapter is not divided into sections.

Sandburg (1878-) was born in Galesburg, Illinois, of Swedish emigrant parents who are said to have had scarcely six months

formal education between them. The father was employed in the railroad blacksmith shops, and when the son was thirteen years old he was started to work driving a milk wagon. Seven years later, with little conventional schooling to his credit but much good reading, particularly in folklore and biography, Sandburg, following service in the Spanish American war, entered Lombard College. He tells of his later brilliant career as writer and poet in "Notes For a Preface" in the edition of his *Complete Poems*. He lives today on his farm near Flat Rock in the mountains of western North Carolina.

Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years, by Carl Sandburg. 2 vols.

Quoting copiously from Sandburg's flashing pages and from Lincoln's witty prose and wonderful sayings and stories, develop the personality and character of Lincoln against the background of his time.

The following topics are suggested from which choices may be made:

Lincoln's life to the day he bade his friends an affectionate farewell at Tolono station, his last stop in Illinois.

Lincoln's heritage from "New England emigrant, Middle State Quaker, Virginia planter, and Kentucky pioneer," especially his heritage from Thomas Lincoln, and from the Hanks family: Lucy, "strong and strange, and wild in her ways," and Nancy, "sad with sorrows like dark stars in blue mist."

The influence, in the making of Lincoln as he was, of books, and of nature, particularly the great silence and beauty of the Illinois land.

The influence of frontier life: the great admiration of physical prowess, the hardy faith in man and the conception of him as worker, the religious conviction, the rowdy humour, the speech, superstitions, customs, sayings, hymns, songs, games, tall tales and heroes. Note how the homely native roots from which Lincoln grew provided the mature man with ideas, vocabulary, traits of character, above all with moral sustenance for the tragic role he was to play.

The place of politics in the life of the people and the humour, skill, sincerity, toughness and intelligence with which Lincoln played the game, not alone with practised politicians and statesmen, but with "the wild shrewd boys" of his day.

Lincoln as son, friend and lover.

Lincoln as husband, with particular attention to Mary Todd Lincoln as a personality.

Lincoln as he appeared to the more sophisticated, and Lincoln, the folk hero, as he came to be appreciated and beloved of the people.

The keen rough humour of the man, the deep melancholy, the dark mystery of "the silent working of the inner life, from which came forces no one outside of himself could know."

Additional Reading:

Folk Laughter on the American Frontier, by Mody C. Boatright. o.p.

A Treasury of Western Folklore, edited by B. A. Botkin. Crown.

Their Weight in Wildcats: Tales of the Frontier, illustrated by James Daugherty. o.p.

Caleb Catlum's America, by Vincent McHugh. o.p.

Tall Tales of the Southwest: An Anthology of Southern and Southwestern Humour—1830-1860, edited by Franklin J. Meine. Knopf.

We Always Lie to Strangers: Tall Tales From the Ozarks, edited by Vance Randolph. Columbia University Press.

Abraham Lincoln: The War Years, by Carl Sandburg. 4 vols. Harcourt.

Abraham Lincoln: A Biography, by Benjamin P. Thomas. Knopf.

CHAPTER VII

THE RIVER HAS NO END

"... the River itself has no beginning or end. In its beginning, it is not yet the River; in its end, it is no longer the River."

—T. S. Eliot

To today's reader the mighty Mississippi may well serve as symbol of that bold flow of men and women from the ancient lands of Europe into the apparently unending promise of the American West. He who has lived on this river with Mark Twain and Huckleberry Finn is fortunate indeed in the quickened imagination with which he can view not alone life along the Mississippi a hundred years ago but that as well which was moving beyond its western shore.

Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens, 1835-1910) had been reared on the banks of the Mississippi and had earned his early living on its waters and, when he wrote of it, it was of a living thing with which he had a rare affinity.

In *Life on the Mississippi* he introduces his reader to the river and tells of the great days of its pilots; in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* he leaves the reader free to float down the river with Huck and Jim, to explore its nature, its shores and towns, to meet its people and to observe their living and meditate on their mores. Before you bid Huck and Jim good-bye, like the poet T. S. Eliot, "you do not merely see the River, you do not merely become acquainted with it through the senses; you experience the River."

1. THE FROZEN TRUTH

"... stick to the facts—just stick to the cold facts; what these gentlemen want for a book is the frozen truth—ain't that so, gentlemen?"—A certain Mr. H.

Life on the Mississippi, by Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain)

Tell something of the superbly varied history of the Mississippi; and borrowing from Mark Twain's warmth of affection for its waters, humorous tolerance of its idiosyncrasies, acceptance of its rapacity and awful solitudes, and poetic appreciation of its beauties, describe the mighty river in the day of the steamboat's great glory.

Follow with a discussion of the science of piloting and of the river pilot in the heyday of steamboating on the Mississippi, neglecting neither

the cold facts as to the pilot's training and essential knowledge, nor the more intriguing actualities of his character, and of the glamour, pomp and power—and oftentimes, heroism—of his position. Regarding the marvelous science of piloting as displayed by these men, this matching of wits with the river, are you inclined to agree with Mark Twain that "there has been nothing like it elsewhere in the world?"

Quoting generously from the hilarious prose, discuss incidents, persons, anecdotes or characteristics of the life which interest you most. Incidentally, note the story of the pilots' organization.

Tell of the death, alas, of the prodigious steamboating industry and, noting carefully Uncle Mumford's comments on man's presumption, explain how the Government and some other things knocked the romance out of piloting.

When Mark Twain returned in the early eighties to travel this still rebellious Mississippi, wealth and circumstance had moved north. Sum up briefly his picture of the newborn Mississippi country above St. Louis in contrast to the desolate Southern areas through which he had just travelled.

In person and temperament ("He had a shock of hair like a cockatoo's and a russet handle-bar mustache. His temper flared and burned out as quickly as a match. He smoked like a lamp chimney, and he had no fear of looking upon either wine when it was red or whiskey when it was red-eye."—Samuel T. Williamson in the *New York Times*), and in style ("Here at last was an authentic American—a native writer thinking his own thoughts, using his own eyes, speaking his own dialect . . . local and western yet continental . . . the very embodiment of the turbulent frontier that had long been shaping a native psychology . . ."—Parrington), Mark Twain has for long been considered the incomparable voice of the American frontier. In your personal opinion, is the book under consideration a wonderful account of the life it depicts? And of the wondrous river itself? Does the humour strike you, as it struck many of Mark Twain's contemporaries on the Eastern seaboard, as a sort of buffoonery, a "mere literary vaudeville?" Or do you agree that though the writer does indeed go full steam ahead into laughter, he does also sufficiently heed Mr. H.'s admonition and stick to the cold facts and the frozen truth of time and character? That his humour springs not only from a buoyantly irreverent spirit, an effervescent sense of the ridiculous, a frank enjoyment of the "swaggering extravagance" of speech and action native to the frontier, but also—and this, too, was native—from robust appreciation of strength and acuteness and energy, and of integrity and character and skill?

2. A MONSTROUS BIG RIVER

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, by Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain)

For those who may not have met Huck previously, introduce him and his friends. Explain his predicament and tell what he did about it, and

how he got into still another predicament about Jim and what he decided to do.

Tell further of Huck's adventures as they indicate his own character and viewpoint, and the nature and character of the society he experienced. Quote generously from his wonderful revelation of people, places, furnishings, manners and customs.

Does the story of the Grangerford-Shepherdson feud make your blood run cold? Is the whole picture of this society seen through Huck's dispassionate eyes and highlighted by the figure of Jim, in actual fact, as T. S. Eliot says, "a far more convincing indictment of slavery than the sensationalist propaganda of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*?"

Leaving the West briefly, consider for a moment Hemingway's remark, so obviously referring to Mark Twain's prose, that "All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called 'Huckleberry Finn.' " Whether you agree with this generalization or not, can you imagine the shock or fascination of this simple, direct prose, with its racy quality of actual speech, to an American bred in the romantic tradition of Sir Walter Scott? To a New Englander reared in the dignified atmosphere of Irving, Cooper, Hawthorne and Melville? To a Southerner uncritical of the rolling periods of Simms and John Pendleton Kennedy, of the "strangeness in beauty" of Edgar Allen Poe, or the glamorous pages of George W. Cable? With certain modern fiction in mind, would you agree in all good humour that Mark Twain, were he alive today, might perhaps wonder just *what* indeed he had fathered?

Returning to the West and the river, for pure pleasure read again Huck's description of the storm (chapter 20) and of life on the river (beginning of chapter 19) before the advent of the king and the duke. Surely such glory of living precludes argument with Huck when he proposes "to light out for the Territory. . .because Aunt Sally she's going to adopt me and civilize me, and I can't stand it. I been there before."

Additional Reading:

The Fatal River: The Life and Death of La Salle, by Frances Gaither. o.p.

La Salle, or the Discovery of the Great West, by Francis Parkman. o.p.

Mississippi Panorama, edited by Perry T. Rathbone. o.p.

Tom Sawyer, by Mark Twain. Harpers and Grosset.

Sam Clemens of Hannibal, by Dixon Wecter. Houghton.

CHAPTER VIII

GOLD

"Amid rushing waters and wildwood freedom, an army of strong men, in red shirts and top-boots, were feverishly in search of the buried gold of earth . . ."—Bret Harte

Bret Harte, who went to California in 1851 when he was himself but fifteen years of age, later wrote of the forty-niners that "The faith, courage, vigor, youth, and capacity for adventure necessary to this emigration [to the gold fields] produced a body of men as strongly distinctive as the companions of Jason. Unlike most pioneers," he pointed out, "the majority were men of profession and education; all were young, and all had staked their future in the enterprise."

The caliber of the larger proportion of these early gold seekers has too often been obscured by the more romantic and necessarily reckless aspects of the later scene. This popular neglect makes even more interesting first hand accounts of life in typical mining settlements. *The Shirley Letters*, written by a New England woman who in 1851 went with her husband into the remote Sierras in search of health, reveal with candour and wit the day by day life of such a settlement, where hard, monotonous work predominated and romance could be found only in the wild beauty of surrounding nature.

Though with the passage of years Bret Harte's work has seemed progressively more sentimental, to read of golden days in the West and not to read his early short stories is unthinkable. These stories introduced to a curious East, at one and the same time, a strange and distant West and a short story form which, though today thoroughly familiar, was at that time unique in its blending of local color, native dialect and human interest.

The son of a professor of Greek, Harte (1836-1902) was born in Albany, New York. Though he had brief schooling, he had the advantage, of which he apparently took full measure, of a fine library. Upon the death of his father he went with his mother to California, where he was successively teacher, clerk, express manager, printer, editor and short story writer, and where he came to know intimately the miners and their world. In 1871, famous in the literary world, he returned East. Later

he entered the consular service. In 1885, he settled in London to devote himself to his writing, none of which ever approached the quality of his early short stories.

1. THE ARGONAUTS

"I like this wild and barbarous life, I leave it with regret."

—Shirley

The Shirley Letters from the California Mines, 1851-1852 with an Introduction and Notes by Carl I. Wheat

Describe a mining town as typified by the half dozen Bars of which Rich Bar was the nucleus: the rumour; the mushroom growth; the haphazard layout; the calico shanties, rag huts, log cabins, *ramaras*; the red bedecked hotels; the débris of mining; the uncertain lines of communication with the outside world; the surrounding magnificence.

"Really, everybody ought to go to the mines, just to see how little it takes to make people comfortable in the world," Shirley exclaimed the day before she left Indian Bar for good. Furnish and provision a typical home in the diggings—dirt floor, wooden bunks, blue blankets and red calico, onions and oysters, iron pots and community spoons—and compare to this Shirley's own really luxurious cabin. Parenthetically, considering the general unreliability of weather and mules, are you amazed at the sometime abundance and quality of the food?

Mark Twain, after himself roughing it in the Far West of the early sixties, wrote in his exuberance: "It was the *only* population of the kind that the world has ever seen gathered together, and it is not likely that the world will ever see its like again. For, observe, it was an assemblage of . . . *young* men—not simpering, dainty, kid-gloved weaklings, but stalwart, muscular, dauntless young braves, brimful of push and energy, and royally endowed with every attribute that goes to make up a peerless and magnificent manhood—the very pick and choice of the world's glorious ones." Compare to Twain's and Harte's, Shirley's comments on the general worth of the miners who came under her observation. Picture individuals who illustrate the wide variety of the population, in nationality, degree of culture and sense of personal and community responsibility. Incidentally, note Shirley's disgusted classification of "professed" gamblers, "best-beloved of Beelzebub."

Commenting on the lot of women, particularly in illness and childbirth, describe the daily lives of these people outside of the mines, lives effectively limited in scope but within limits, in spite of accompanying drabness, as wild and free as any heart could wish. Note the result of bad weather and idleness, typified in the January Saturnalia which stirred Shirley to such generous understanding. In this connection, explain the claiming system and the back-breaking methods of mining to which these men ordinarily devoted their energies.

Tell of the administration of justice as Shirley witnessed it in the gold diggings, particularly in the barbarous days of July, the turning point from an earlier more lawful life. Note Royce's remark that Shirley's series of pictures is typical of the life of many camps: "easily secured peace, then brutally intolerant degeneracy, and then the wretched dissolution."

In conclusion, sum up what this hard work, revelry, bloodshed and sparse living came to in fame and fortune for the average individual. Was the dream of gold and freedom usually worth the actuality?

Additional Reading:

The Big Bonanza, by Dan de Quille (William Wright). Knopf.

Comstock Bonanza, edited by Duncan Emrich. Vanguard.

Gold Rush Album, Scribner; and *The Western Gate: A San Francisco Reader*, edited by Joseph Henry Jackson. Farrar, Straus.

Troupers of the Gold Coast: or The Rise of Lotta Crabtree, by Constance Rourke. o.p.

California, from the Conquest in 1846 to the Second Vigilance Committee in San Francisco: A Study of American Character, by Josiah Royce. Knopf.

Mining Camps: A Study in American Frontier Government, by Charles Howard Shinn. Knopf.

Roughing It, by Mark Twain. Harpers.

California Pictorial (1786-1859), by Jeanne van Nostrand and Edith Coulter. University of California Press.

2. COMPANIONS OF JASON

The Best of Bret Harte, edited by Wilhelmina Harper and Aimee M. Peters

"The Luck of Roaring Camp," "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," "Tennessee's Partner," and "How Santa Claus Came to Simpson's Bar," are Harte's four most famous stories. Quoting generously, tell the story of each of them. With the singular conditions of the period in mind, examine character and incident for truth to human nature.

With which of the following comments would you agree?

"Bret Harte's pages afford us the rare privilege of again communing with genuine primitive feeling, with eternal human qualities, not deflected or warped by convention. He gives us the literature of democracy." (Halleck)

"Indeed, one secret of his charm is the way in which his vivid pictures of vileness, dissoluteness, squalor, and misery are illuminated by deeds of the tenderest charity and the highest heroism." (Newcomer)

". . . the tinsel that Harte used so effectively." (Charles Warren Stoddard)

"But Bret Harte had never been a miner. He was not realist enough, nor honest enough, to portray the West in its stark, grotesque reality. He was only a literary middleman who skillfully purveyed such wares as his eastern readers wanted. In consequence he coated his tales with a senti-

mental picaresque—pandered to the common taste by discovering nuggets of pure gold in the dregs and outcasts of the mining-camps.” (Parrington)

Additional Reading:

The Led Horse Claim; *The Chosen Valley*; and *Coeur d'Alene*, by Mary Hallock Foote. o.p.

Western Union, by Zane Grey. o.p. (In this connection, see *Southern Pacific*, by Neill C. Wilson and Frank J. Taylor; the story of the building of the railroad. McGraw.)

Wolfville; *Wolfville Days*; and *Wolfville Nights*, by Alfred Henry Lewis (Dan Quin). o.p.

The Blazed Trail; *The Rules of the Game*; and *The Claim Jumpers*, by Stewart Edward White. o.p.

The Virginian, by Owen Wister. Grosset.

CHAPTER IX

O PIONEERS

After the Civil War it remained to invade and conquer the prairies and the great plains whose rolling miles advancing settlers had ignored in their rush to the reported wealth of the Far West. It is stories of this settlement that O. E. Rølvaag and Willa Cather tell, each in a novel as moving in its insight as it is beautiful in expression.

In *My Antonia* Willa Cather writes of a land and a people she understood and loved, for though born in Virginia she was reared on the Nebraska plains. She once explained, "Few of our neighbors were Americans—most of them were Danes, Swedes, Norwegians and Bohemians. I grew fond of some of these immigrants—particularly the old women, who used to tell me of their home country. I used to think them underrated, and wanted to explain them to their neighbors." In no one of her novels did she explain these women in pages more radiant, more compassionate, or more convincing, than in *My Antonia*.

Ole Edvart Rølvaag (1876-1931), as his name would indicate, was himself from one of the old countries. Born on a Norwegian island near the edge of the Arctic circle, it was only at the age of twenty, after slight schooling and dangerous and hardy years as a fisherman off the Lofoten Islands, that he came to America. Here for several years he earned an unsatisfactory living at farming and miscellaneous jobs before he settled down to get an education. After graduation at the age of twenty-eight from St. Olaf College in Minnesota, and a year at the University of Oslo in his native land, he returned to St. Olaf's, where for a quarter of a century he taught Norwegian literature. Parrington points out that in the larger sense his education was got from life, which he seemed to "have lived with a rich and daring intensity," and that it was his own venturesome experience that found "expression in the creative realism and brooding imagination of his work." The majority of readers, certainly, will agree that from this realism and this imagination has come an epic of the settlement of the American plains.

1. WE DISCOVER HEROES

"... This formless prairie had no heart that beat, no waves that sang, no soul that could be touched. . . ."—Beret

"... Endless it was, and wonderful! . . ."—Per Hansa

Giants in the Earth: A Saga of the Prairie, by O. E. Rölvaag

Tell the story of the settlement at Spring Creek. Show on a map its approximate location and picture its early complete isolation, relieved only by the occasional caravans that crept briefly out of "the blue-green endlessness"; describe the growth of the settlement and the peopling of the prairies to the east, noting the approach of the railroad; and discuss the giants of disaster which came out of the distance and out of the heavens to overwhelm the "viking" settlers.

Tell very fully the story of Per Hansa, striding "forward with outstretched arms toward the wonders of the future," and of the soul-sick Beret, "an exile in an unknown desert," forever longing for the security of her distant homeland, forever fearful of "this vast wind-swept void" in which she lived and from which "no road led back." Capture, if you can, the subtly beautiful quality of Per Hansa's love for Beret, and his feeling of responsibility for her as opposed to the urgency of his dream.

Develop Per Hansa's vigorous and resilient character, drawing example from the resourcefulness and warmth of his daily life, his relation with his neighbors, his treatment of those the prairie brought and his final sacrifice when, in Parrington's words, "driven by all the imperatives of fate, he sets out, skis on his feet and others at his back, to face the last great adventure."

Weave into your narrative Rölvaag's eloquent descriptions of the prairie, in promise, in menace and in fury.

Discuss the wealth of human potentialities in the simple immigrants of the settlement, noting particularly the really magnificent Hans Olga for whom "each day proved too short, both for himself and his song," the vigorous, glowing Sörine and the slightly comical but ingenious Tönseten. In this connection, comment on the terrible sufferings of others than Beret for lack of religious counsel, and on the compelling account of the minister and his visits.

What, in your opinion, makes this book so beautiful, so moving, and so important in any study of the settlement of the prairies? Is it the simple genuineness of the story of human experience on the trackless plains where "the thousand-year-old hunger of the poor after human happiness had been unloosed?" Is it the essential goodness and kindness of the people? Is it the author's own deep compassion? Is it the magnificence of the struggle set off against the futility of personal effort so poignantly disclosed in the closing pages of the book? Is it the memory of the child's grave lost in the great loneliness of the prairie and the haunting fact, brought into such vivid focus, that Beret was right, that it was "only by ruthless sacrifice of life [and happiness] that this endless desolation" was ever peopled? Discuss.

2. THE PLOUGH AGAINST THE SUN

"She was a rich mine of life, like the founders of early races."

My Antonia, by Willa Cather

Explain the general plan of this book, and tell of Jim and his grandparents, of Otto and Jake, of Jim's early awakened and persisting interest in the immigrant settlers, and of the free life shared by him and Antonia amid the wonders of the prairie. Read from Miss Cather's descriptions of the memorable beauty of this prairie, its vegetation and its wildlife.

Describe the Shimerda family and tell of their coming, of the early impossible living conditions, of the terrible winter, of the grieving and death (so awkward in this isolated new society) of old Mr. Shimerda, and of the determination to back-breaking work of the surly Ambrosch and his sister, Antonia.

Tell in general of the calibre of most of the immigrants, of the poverty and hard work, and of the persistence in progress. Mention, incidentally, the almost disproportionate value of cows and hens to this life, and note Miss Cather's perfectly communicated feeling for the bleakness of savage winter, the throb of windy spring, the loveliness of blazing summer.

As the plough outlined heroically against the molten red of the setting sun symbolized the strong, simple life of these people who broke the prairie, so the strong, gallant immigrant girls personified the energy and intelligence and unselfishness which the life demanded. Describe some of Antonia's friends and tell their stories, noting the sense of abundant life and gayety which they brought to the bored, stagnant town, and the grudging attitude of most of the native Americans.

Finish the story of Antonia herself, who didn't mind work a bit if she didn't have to put up with sadness.

Parrington thinks that though Miss Cather had "a warm sympathy with the emotional life of pioneer women and a poignant understanding of their bleak lot," she drew back from the threshold of final tragedy, pausing before she had penetrated to the core of futility, and refusing to let the waste of all finer values exacted by the prairies dominate the scene. In your opinion, was Miss Cather's object in this book rather to illuminate the sources of life, strength of heart, and generous emotions—the rich mine of life in such as Antonia—that triumphed in golden wheat fields and bright-flowered pastures and tall straight sons, than to underline the tragic waste of life and happiness and potentialities that of necessity also went into their making? If the first was her object, did she attain it? Discuss.

Additional Reading:

O Pioneers, by Willa Cather. Houghton.

The Land of the Crooked Tree, by U. P. Hedrick. Oxford.

Wisconsin My Home, by Erna Oleson Xan, as told by her mother, Thurine Oleson. University of Wisconsin Press.

CHAPTER X

COLOSSUS

"America has been in large part the answer to the problem of what happens when unlimited human energy meets illimitable natural resources, especially under historical and political conditions which permit of unprecedented individual freedom of action."—
James Truslow Adams

By 1880, more than 11,000,000 people were living under stable government in that Great West (approximately one-half of the territory covered by the United States today) which in 1800 was either left blank on the map, or was fancifully decorated by the topographer. Railroads and telegraph lines spanned the continent. Free land was fast disappearing. The era of the self-sufficing pioneer had given way to that of the industrial pioneer intent on the exploitation of the vast natural potentialities of the region. In the unprecedented capitalization of the national domain following the Civil War there had been evidenced the mutual hostility of the squatter ideal of freedom to compete unrestrictedly for the resources of a continent, and the ideal of a democracy - of "government of the people, by the people, for the people."

In *The Titan*, Theodore Dreiser wrote of the exploiter; in *The Octopus*, Frank Norris wrote of the exploited. Both Dreiser and Norris were "the intellectual children of the nineties," to quote Parrington, "and their art was a reflection of that sober period of American disillusion" with the easy optimism and high hopes of the Gilded Age. Both men spoke with intent, almost ponderous honesty to sober audiences, and each wrote with a command of his subject which was not alone revelatory of conditions and character, but which is today still thoroughly absorbing.

In their approach to their subjects, the two men differed sharply. Although both of them belonged in the movement away from the romantic and utopian schools towards naturalism, Norris was a reformer, Dreiser, a painstaking observer. With a fiery zeal for truth and a dedication to the cause of human happiness, Norris thought in terms of our national epic as a people. To him the defeat of the American farmer in his struggle with the railroads was an economic tragedy, and it is from this viewpoint that

he tells in *The Octopus* of the early struggle between the railroad and the wheat ranchers of the fabulous San Joaquin Valley in central California. Strangely, though the writing page by page never strikes fire, the novel as a whole does, and so serves as a fitting introduction to that great conflict between capital and the public which grew out of the relation of the railroads to the welfare of the communities through which they ran.

Although Dreiser says that in observing life in the Gilded Age, he was more interested in the "underdog. . . than the upper one," he says he was "tremendously interested by the rise of various captains of industry then already bestriding America, their opportunities and pleasures, the ease and skill with which they organized trusts and combinations, their manipulation of the great railroads, oil and coal fields, their control of the telegraph and telephone, their sharp and watchful domination of American politics." Viewing this world he became fascinated by the career of Charles T. Yerkes, the Chicago railroad king who has been described as "the most dazzling financier of his day," and from this fascinated study came, in *The Financier* and *The Titan*, Frank Algernon Cowperwood (b. 1837), a figure so commandingly presented that with the passage of years he has become for America as real a figure of the acquisitive society of his day as Yerkes himself.

Dreiser (1871-1945) was born of German-American blood in Terre Haute, Indiana. One of a large and extremely improvident family, he grew up in bitter poverty. Prior to devoting himself to writing, he served an apprenticeship as a newspaper man, covering among other things the Chicago slums, the rackets of political journalism and the industrial warfare in Pittsburg in the 1890's.

Norris (1870-1902) was born in Chicago, attended the University of California and Harvard University, studied art in Paris, and having already written several fine novels might have become a major writer had he not died in his thirty-second year.

1. OCTOPUS

"Is not our death struggle typical? Is it not one of many, is it not symbolical of the great and terrible conflict that is going on everywhere in these United States? . . . while the Wheat, wrapped in Nirvanic calm, [grows] steadily under the night, alone with the stars and with God." *The Octopus*, by Frank Norris

Drawing attention to the direct relation of the railroad to the survival of the San Joaquin Valley ranchers, explain the situation between the wheat growers and the railroad when this story opens.

Describe the community immediately concerned and explain the variety and character of its inhabitants, noting the wide divergence of social attitudes as represented by S. Behrman, the railroad trust man, for instance, the poet Presley, and Caraher, the saloon keeper.

Discuss the personalities and characteristics of several of the representative ranchers as opposed to those of the railroad's representatives. Would the contrast bear out Parrington's remark that "Farmers and bankers do not think alike; country and town create different psychologies?"

Develop at length the course of the ugly war between the wheat growers and the railroad, and the tactics employed by each. Note that Dyke's private war fared no better than the ranchers' collective battle.

Explain the final outcome as it determined the future and happiness of the various men and women concerned. Tell of the wealth of the railroad magnates; quote from and comment on the contrasting scenes of opulence and misery near the end of the book.

As a naturalist, Norris should have written with complete objectivity. Do you think his passionate partisanship confuses the issue, or do you feel that his scorn for the trust and his concern for the welfare and happiness of his valley people bring a moving richness and depth to his story? Discuss, considering at the same time his generally effective use of symbols, of the wheat itself and of the relentless drive on the jackrabbits.

Do you personally find in this book a voice worthy of the embattled men and women who, not alone in the West but all over America, would ever more desperately join issue with the ever more powerful trusts? Comment.

Additional Reading:

The Bomb, by Frank Harris. o.p.

The Pit, by Frank Norris. o.p.

The Jungle, by Upton Sinclair. Harper.

2. TITAN

"What rights had the rank and file, anyhow, in economic and governmental development? . . . Cowperwood was not disturbed. He did not believe in either the strength of the masses or their ultimate rights, though he sympathized with the condition of individuals, and did believe that men like himself were sent into the world to better perfect its mechanism and habitable order."

The Titan, by Theodore Dreiser

Describe the town of Chicago as Cowperwood saw it on his arrival, and explain its potentialities for wealth as he visioned them.

Tell of Cowperwood's past and follow his progress to his goal, with particular attention to the part played in the game in Chicago by Eastern capital, and to the manipulation by the newspapers and the politicians of the public credulity and confidence. Do you think Dreiser's portrayal of

the relation between business and politics, and business and the courts, is convincing? Discuss.

Choose a few from Dreiser's "staggering procession" of Chicago buccaneers on 'change and tell of the way they lived, their ethics and morals, their attitude toward "the people." Tell also of some of the equally buccaneering spirits of the slums. Do you admire, by the way, the masterly manner in which Dreiser presents these wolves so that Cowperwood's activities appear not indeed a sin against society but rather a question of superior wit and daring in a completely predatory world? Had power really become "not an instrument but a way of life?"

Discuss at some length the character of Cowperwood, as Dreiser saw him, as Aileen saw him, and as he saw himself. How did he compare, in general, with the old pioneer of the land in determination, endurance, independence? In ingenuity, individualism, imagination and optimism? In ruthlessness, aggressiveness, brutality? Do you find yourself actually sympathizing with him in the sheer intensity of his passion for accumulation? In your mind, actually mating his powers with the great natural powers of the West?

Granted Dreiser's portraits are near enough to reality to be credible, do you find it easy to understand why so many reform movements and movements of protest—the Granger movement, the Greenback movement, the Populist movement, Bryan Democracy, Roosevelt Republicanism—have come out of the West?

Additional Reading:

"*Eagle Forgotten*;" *The Life of John Peter Altgeld*, by Harry Barnard. o.p.

The Financier, World Pub.; *Sister Carrie*, Mod. Lib.; *A Hoosier Holiday*; *A Book About Myself*; *Dawn*; and *Newspaper Days*; by Theodore Dreiser. o.p.

Memoirs of an American Citizen, by Robert Herrick. o.p.

John Reed: The Making of a Revolutionary, by Granville Hicks. Macmillan.

The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens. Harcourt.

CHAPTER XI

CLOSED FRONTIERS

Three books of fiction, each now a classic in its own field, offer significant accounts of the lives of the farmers and the middle class in the West during and following the period when the United States was being transformed from an agricultural to an industrial nation, with a consequent loss of individual dignity and an increasing tendency toward standardization of human beings.

In *Main-Travelled Roads*, Hamlin Garland, himself a product of the prairies, gives the first authentic expression in American literature to the hard and bitter realities of rural life in the 1870's and the 1880's, when the farmers were gradually being submerged in the new industrial civilization. In *Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck tells the story of descendants of first settlers who, in the depression years of the 1930's while the battle raged between the people and concentrated financial power, vainly turned their hopes toward the Far West. In *Main Street*, the first of his effective assaults on the bourgeois materialism and herd psychology of American society as he saw it, Sinclair Lewis attacks the profound spiritual poverty of a small Middle Western town in the years preceding the First World War.

Each of these authors was writing in rebellion against conditions of his own land and his own people, but from sharply differing reactions. Garland (1860-1940) was born and reared in the farm country near West Salem, Wisconsin, attended a small academy at Osage, Iowa, taught school in Illinois, and in early young manhood farmed a claim on the bleak Dakota plains. His sober, grimly objective stories of the social and economic plight of the farming population pass beyond fiction into somber fact. The reader should recall that from the ranks of bewildered, hopeless farmers such as these sprang the strength of the agrarian revolt of the last quarter of the nineteenth century against the exploiting middle class.

Steinbeck (1902-) was born in Salinas, California, of pioneer California stock, attended Stanford University, and has written for the most part about the diverse people of his native state. In

his belief in the superior goodness of simple people, he is often betrayed by his very humanity into extreme sentimentality.

Lewis (1885-1951) is neither compassionate nor sentimental. He is annoyed and indignant. Born in Sauk Center, Minnesota, and graduated from Yale University, he served his apprenticeship in the newspaper and publishing world. When *Main Street* was published in 1920 he was recognized as a writer to be reckoned with, not alone as a novelist but as a vigorous and penetrating critic of American society.

1. BITTER DUST

In the darkness with a great bundle of grief
the people march.

In the night, and overhead a shovel of stars for keeps,
the people march:

Where to? what next?

—Sandburg

Main-Travelled Roads, by Hamlin Garland

Grapes of Wrath, by John Steinbeck

Describe the life of the prairie farmer as pictured in Garland's stories, paying special heed to the burden of work and deprivation which the women carried. (Garland later confessed that though he intended to tell the truth even his "youthful zeal faltered in the midst of a revelation of the lives led by the women on the farms of the middle border. Before the tragic futility of their suffering," he wrote, "my pen refused to shed its ink. Over the hidden chamber of their maternal agonies I drew the veil.") Accustomed as you are to realistic writing, do these conditions shock you as they must have shocked the "gentilities" of Garland's day, bred as the well-to-do were on a romantic West?

Tell the personal stories of several of these grim, gaunt people whom the satirists of that day, as William Dean Howells pointed out, "found so easy to caricature as Hayseeds, and whose blind groping for fairer conditions" was "so grotesque to the newspapers and so menacing to the politicians." As a measure of progress, compare the attitude of the newspapers, the politicians and the public today to the farmer, particularly to the farmer of the fertile and abundant Middle West.

Do you find in Garland's farmers any shred of the buoyancy, the self-reliance, the optimism, the aggressiveness of those who, in the pioneer democracy of open frontiers, first came to subdue the virgin West? Would you agree with Mary Ellen Lease of Kansas who advised the farmers to "raise less corn and more hell" with a government which seemed to have forgotten the democratic principles on which it was founded? By the way, how do these people and their farms compare with Willa Cather's prairie folks and farms?

Explain the conditions that, some fifty odd years later, brought about the eviction of the farmers in Oklahoma, and tell in its pathos, courage, humor and sordidness, the story of the Joads and their kind. Relate incidents typical of the governing classes and of the treatment the migrants received. (In all fairness, how would you react to such an invasion of your state even though it had been invited?)

Describe some of the characters and discuss their philosophy: the preacher, Casy, or Ma Joad, or Tom, for example, or even lusty old Granma and Grampa.

Again, what lingering remnants of the spirit which such short years before had taken their forebears to frontier farms do you find in these migrants whose lives were "bleak cycles of exploitation and rejection"; in this world of the poor where men and women "took what come to 'em dry-eyed," and where "We got to have a house" was a constant but futile refrain? Are these people, ignorant, filthy, coarse as they may be, still the stuff of which good citizens could be made? Note, incidentally, that the problem has yet to be solved.

2. THE TRIBAL GOD

"It is contentment . . . the contentment of the quiet dead, who are scornful of the living for their restless walking. It is negation canonized as the one positive virtue. It is the prohibition of happiness. It is slavery self-sought and self-defended. It is dullness made God."—Carol Kennicott

Main Street, by Sinclair Lewis

Carol Kennicott, traveling across it, felt that the prairie land of the Northern Middle West was "a land to be big in." Discuss her aspirations and fears for this land in its martial immensity, this "land of dairy herds and exquisite lakes, of new automobiles and tar-paper shanties and silos like red towers, of clumsy speech and a hope that is boundless," this empire which fed a quarter of the world and yet its work was merely begun. In contrast, describe the reality of Gopher Prairie and tell the story of Carol's defeat and final resignation.

Through some of its members, characterize this materialistic, self-satisfied, conventional society, fearful of beauty, and scornful and defiant of new ideas. Consider perhaps those representative goodfellows, the Haydocks, the Dyers and the Clarks; or Kennicott, the goodfellow, and Kennicott, the surgeon; small, active, sallow Vida Sherwin, afraid of "foreign culture," but with faith in the goodness and purpose of everything; lonesome Guy Pollock; the unspeakable Widow Bogart and Cyrus; or Aunt Bessie and Uncle Whit, who had never *heard* such funny ideas as Carol's on divorce and illegitimacy, and the Bible and wine and the capitalistic system, and mushrooms and evolution, etc., etc.; or Bresnahan, the essence of the materialistic ideal.

Consider voices which, with Carol's, were raised in protest, notably those of the farmer, Wes Brannigan, and the handyman, Bjornstam. Tell the story of the latter as it illustrates the limitations and fears of Gopher

Prairie. Incidentally, did Carol have anything real to offer in place of dullness and ugliness and back-slapping, or was she herself guilty of superficiality and of desires to ape she knew not exactly what? Comment.

When you have read every page of this book, do you feel that though it is solemn, even occasionally dull, perhaps old fashioned, the book is yet in fact a brilliant dissection of "the tribal God mediocrity," and that viewed from the vantage point of thirty odd years, it is exceedingly keen in its analysis and in its judgments? Is it even today "irritatingly effective?" Discuss.

Additional Reading:

Winesburg, Ohio, Modern Library; and *A Story Teller's Story*, by Sherwood Anderson. o.p.

America Is West: An Anthology of Midwestern Life and Literature, edited by John T. Flanagan. University of Minnesota Press.

Miss Lulu Bett, by Zona Gale. Appleton-Century-Croft.

Prairie Folks and *Rose of Dutcher's Coolly*, by Hamlin Garland. o.p.

Babbitt, Harcourt; and *Elmer Gantry*, by Sinclair Lewis. o.p.

Democracy's Norris: The Biography of a Lonely Crusade, by Alfred Lief. o.p.

Collected Poems, by Vachel Lindsay. Macmillan.

The Man with the Hoe and Other Poems, by Edwin Markham. Harper.

The Spoon River Anthology, by Edgar Lee Masters. Macmillan.

Fighting Liberal: An Autobiography, by George W. Norris. Macmillan.

For a contrasting optimistic view of village and rural life and people, see:

The Valley of Democracy, by Meredith Nicholson. o.p.

The Poems of James Whitcomb Riley. Bobbs.

The Gentleman from Indiana, o.p.; *Penrod*, o.p.; and *Seventeen*, by Booth Tarkington. Grosset.

At the Court of Boyville and *In Our Town*, by William Allen White. o.p.

CHAPTER XII

A VAST MUSIC

"And find ever new testaments of man as a sojourner,
And a toiler and a brother of fresh understandings?"

—Sandburg

Of the great golden industrial West of factories and railroads, of cities and slums, of waving yellow wheat and rolling plains, of the West as it endures, where "the earth stays and the transmission of energy," where "the strong men keep coming on" Carl Sandburg has written in syllables passionate with love of the land and love of the masses, native and foreign-born, who people it and to whom in his pages he gives speech. It is fitting that this outline should close with Sandburg's poems, descended as the poet is, not from the stock of pioneers who faced the old unconquered West, but from the wave of immigrants who braved the new industrial civilization which shaped the West of today. In this industrial civilization Sandburg grew up and from it he drew much of the stuff of his poetry, poetry which leaves with the reader not alone an incisive vision of the West, but a feeling, like the echoes of a vast music, of enduring potentialities.

Complete Poems, by Carl Sandburg

In lines variously characterized by vigor, contrast, color, compassion, humor, and earnestness, Sandburg's creation of the West grows slowly. A poem, another poem, a line, a word, and gradually the region emerges—yesterday and today, inequalities and humanities, violence and tenderness, seasons and weathers, farms, cities and people.

Create an impression of this West by reading and commenting on selected passages and poems.

Do you feel that Sandburg's West is in its own way as brutal in power and as magnificent in promise as was that vast unconquered West into which Lewis and Clark first ventured? Does such a West justify the faith of Turner that "The true point of view in the history of this nation is not the Atlantic Coast, it is the Great West?" Discuss.

Additional Reading:

Always the Young Strangers, by Carl Sandburg. Harcourt.

A Western Journal: A Daily Log of the Great Parks Trip, by Thomas Wolfe. o.p.

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* The Cresset Library edition of this book, published by the Crown Press (\$2.00) has a fascinating introduction by T. S. Eliot.

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